

Project Title: Derelict Crab Trap Removal in Coastal Louisiana

Federal Program: Coastal Impact Assistant Program

Nominating Entity: Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Marine Fisheries Division

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<u>Total CIAP Funds Requested:</u>	Three year project	Year 1	\$ 62,850
		Year 2	\$ 44,000
		Year 3	\$ 45,150
		Total	\$152,000

Infrastructure Funds Proposed: None

Description and Location of Project:

The primary objective of the derelict crab trap removal program is to remove lost and abandoned crab traps from coastal waters of Louisiana. Clean ups have already taken place along portions of the Louisiana coast. The program is administered and coordinated by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF). LDWF staff will develop recommendations to the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission in August or September of each year concerning selection of additional closure areas and closure dates.

Information dissemination on trap closures will target crab fishermen and other water-based user groups. A direct mail-out will be made to local recreational and commercial crab trap fishermen advising them of the upcoming closure and trap removal effort. Brochures will be placed at marinas, commercial seafood dealers, bait and tackle shops, etc. to publicize the program. Information will also be distributed via news releases, radio, and meetings.

Temporary disposal sites with dumpsters will be located at convenient locations such as marinas or boat launches. Several volunteer days will be emphasized, although traps may be retrieved at any time during the closure period. LDWF personnel will be present at the disposal sites on the volunteer days to provide supplies (tarps, gloves, grappling hooks, etc.), maps, and instructions to volunteers, to unload and crush traps from boats, and to place the traps in the dumpsters.

Actual physical removal of traps will be largely conducted by volunteers, although LDWF personnel will also collect derelict crab traps using their vessels. A contractor will transport the traps from the temporary disposal sites to permanent disposal sites. Staff will monitor the project and document the number of traps recovered and other useful information. A completion report will be prepared.

CIAP Project Type: 1. Conservation, restoration, and protection of coastal area, including wetlands.

Project Justification:

Each year thousands of crab traps are lost or abandoned in Louisiana waters. Derelict traps result from numerous sources: weather or hydrological factors (i.e., tides, currents, or storm surges); senescence of buoys, lines, or knots; failure to assemble and maintain buoys and buoy lines properly; unintentional cutting of buoy lines by vessel propellers; and intentional cutting of buoy lines by vandals. Derelict traps continue to catch fish, crustaceans, turtles, and other organisms. Derelict crab traps are also a source of conflict among boaters, recreational fishermen, and shrimp fishermen, and are very unsightly.

Removal of derelict crab traps will accrue several benefits: reduction in ghost fishing mortality of blue crabs and other organisms; reduction in user group conflicts with boaters, recreational fishermen, and shrimp fishermen; and, enhancement of visual aesthetics.

Louisiana's derelict crab trap removal program began in 2004, and has continued to present. Seven area crab trap closures and crab trap cleanups have been held. Results by year include:

- 2004 – Two closures/clean ups for 6,894 traps
- 2005 – Four closures/clean ups for 4,623 traps
- 2006 – One closure/clean up for 2,940 traps

A total of 14,457 derelict crab traps have been removed.

Thousands of traps still exist in the bays and estuaries of Louisiana. Removing the remaining derelict traps cannot be accomplished without additional financial assistance. The derelict crab trap removal program is volunteer based; however, the program is sponsored by the LDWF and staff are involved with administration, coordination of volunteers and logistics, actual derelict crab trap retrieval, and monitoring. Shallow draft boats powered by air-cooled engines are also needed for LDWF personnel to efficiently target large numbers of derelict crab traps located in shallow waters.

Project Cost Share: None.

Costs:	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
A. Personnel:	\$14,000	\$14,500	\$15,000	\$43,500
B. Fringe:	\$4,350	\$4,500	\$4,650	\$13,500
C. Travel:	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$7,500
D. Equipment:	\$25,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$35,000
E. Supplies:	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$9,000
F. Contractual:	\$,8000	\$8,500	\$9,000	\$25,500
G. Construction:	0	0	0	0
H. Other:	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$18,000
I. Indirect Costs:	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	\$62,850	\$44,000	\$45,150	\$152,000